

Lake Mead National Recreation Area Environmental Education



FIELD PROGRAM

Grade 1

“Bet You Can’t See Me!”

A walk through the Mojave Desert will help students compare color variations in the desert and explore animal’s use of camouflage.

THEME

Camouflage is an important adaptation for desert survival.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to identify at least three colors in the Mojave Desert.
Students will explore at least two ways that camouflage benefits desert animals.
Students will discover and compare patterns in nature.

VOCABULARY

adaptation - a physical or behavioral feature of an animal or plant that helps it survive in its habitat

habitat - the place where an animal or plant lives in nature

camouflage - disguises of color, pattern, and shape that an animal has to match its surroundings

prey - an animal hunted or killed by another animal for food

predator - an animal that lives mostly by killing and eating other animals

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Wildlife of the Mojave Desert live in a land of extreme temperatures and little precipitation and depend on a variety of adaptations for their own survival. One adaptation common to all animals is camouflage. With the sparse vegetation found in the desert, wildlife need to “blend in” with their surroundings in order to not be seen.

By studying the variation of color in our landscape, you can get a pretty good idea of the colors of desert wildlife. Upon closer inspection, you’ll discover that most animals are not one single color, but a combination of several colors and patterns. These patterns benefit both the predator and the prey.

**BEFORE THE
FIELD TRIP
ACTIVITY**

Camouflage Fun - Gather at least 10 man-made items familiar to the students that are commonly used in the classroom, (for example, black marker, chalk, chalkboard eraser, dry board eraser, etc.) and show the students the items. Place them around the room so that they "blend in" well with their surroundings. Have the children try to find those items. Why were some items easier to locate than others? Compare their findings.

**AFTER THE
FIELD TRIP
ACTIVITY**

Patterns in Nature - Allow the students time to explore the school yard to find man-made patterns (play equipment, bricks, etc.) and patterns in nature (tree bark, grass, clouds, etc.). Have them draw a picture of one man-made pattern and a pattern in nature and compare the two.

**Benyus, Janine M., *The Field Guide to Wildlife Habitats*
Simon and Schuster (1989)**

**Cornett, James W., *Wildlife of the North American Deserts*
Nature Trails Press (1987)**

**MacMahon, James A., *Deserts*
Alfred A. Knopf (1986)**



We would like to hear from your students! Please let us know what their favorite part of the field trip was.